

ABSTRACT

According to the invention an embryogenic cell mass is cultured with a culture medium comprising an anti-auxin resulting in an unexpected shift in physiology from proliferation to maturation. Proliferation is reduced so that the formation of new immature embryos ceases. Reduction of proliferation facilitates the transition from proliferation to maturation and maturation frequency is increased to a much larger extent than expected. Surprisingly, it has been discovered that the quality of the somatic embryos is not reduced, although the activity of the important endogenous plant growth regulator, auxin, is reduced. As a matter of fact, the overall quality of the mature embryos harvested at the end of maturation is actually increased over the prior art.